

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

December 11, 2012

During the past year the Department of Regional Planning has received numerous complaints from residents in the San Gabriel Valley including the communities of Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights concerning the proliferation of postpartum recovery homes. These postpartum recovery homes, also known as “maternity hotels,” are locating in existing single-family residential zones and have been disruptive to nearby residences and neighborhoods. Neighbors have reported that these uses are really commercial business operations similar to a boarding house that bring extra traffic, noise, pollution and parking problems and that such uses have proven to be a disruptive and incompatible with the low intensity non-business character found in a single-family residential environment.

Based on the complaints received by the Department of Regional Planning, the postpartum recovery homes are often single-family homes that charge rent and fees for room rental and support service accommodations provided. Typically a room is rented in the residence to the family of the recovering mother and baby visiting from abroad. The new parents travel to Los Angeles County before arranging childbirth at a local hospital and then after the baby is delivered stay in a postpartum recovery home.

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These homes function more like a hotel and business that typically have a nursing staff, coaching support, cook and other onsite support staff. These postpartum recovery homes operate as businesses without benefit of appropriate zoning regulations and standards to guide their placement and compatibility with other surrounding land uses. Currently, the County's zoning regulations do not specifically address this type of use; however the County's Zoning Code has provisions limiting the number of individual renters allowed to reside within a single family dwelling to no more than four. To date, the Department of Regional Planning has received numerous complaints regarding the establishment of postpartum recovery homes operating in single family residences in the Rowland Heights / Hacienda Heights area. To protect single-family neighborhoods from any further proliferation and intrusion of this incompatible use and to protect the existing residential character of our existing unincorporated neighborhoods further study and review of the impacts of these facilities need to be examined including the appropriate zoning for locating such uses and development standards.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board:

1. Instruct the Director of Regional Planning to collaborate with the County Counsel, the Department of Public Works/Building and Safety, Health Department, Fire Department and other State agencies with regulatory authority to investigate complaints regarding these uses; and
2. Instruct the Director of Regional Planning to review the proliferation of postpartum recovery homes within the unincorporated area and to report back to the Board in 30 days with a status report containing Regional Planning's findings, recommendations and actions.

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